

For Immediate Release
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Rep. Pitts Introduces Bill to Study Post Abortion Depression

Legislation would set up treatment programs to help women

Washington— Congressman Joe Pitts (PA-16) took the lead this week in championing mental health issues facing millions of American women. Today, Rep. Pitts introduced the Post Abortion Depression Research and Care Act, which directs the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to study the emotional impact of abortion on women and set up treatment programs to help these women.

Yesterday, the House Energy and Commerce Committee, with the support of Rep. Pitts, favorably reported H.R. 20, the Melanie Blocker-Stokes Postpartum Depression Research and Care Act. The legislation authorizes funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to increase research into the cause of and treatment for postpartum depression. The bill also includes a provision that is intended to encourage research on the emotional effects of various pregnancy outcomes.

Congressman Pitts' statement follows:

“Women deserve to know the long-term effects of abortion on their mental and emotional well-being, and women who have had an abortion deserve to have mental health professionals who acknowledge the emotional impact of abortion and have the tools to treat it.

I believe that increased research on post-abortion and postpartum depression will lead to greater awareness of this issue and the development of compassionate outreach and counseling programs to help women.”

Background:

A study conducted by a prominent researcher in New Zealand, David Fergusson, has found that women who have abortions have higher rates of depression than those who do not. According to his research, 78.6 percent of 15 to 18 year old girls who have abortions display symptoms of major depression, compared to only 31.2 percent of their peers who do not have abortions; and 27 percent of 21 to 25 year old women who have abortions have suicidal ideation, compared to only 8 percent of their peers who do not have abortions.